

KINULI

by Vera Chaplina



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Kinuli was born in the Moscow Zoo. She was given the name because in Russian *Kinuli* means "abandoned," and the cub had been abandoned by her lioness mother. Vera Chaplina, who was in charge of the young animals in the zoo, saved the cub. She took it home, fed it from a bottle, nursed it through its first days. And so Kinuli came to be raised in a Moscow apartment in the middle 1930's with the author, her husband, young son and brother—and an assortment of neighbors and their children who loved and spoiled the growing lioness.

With Kinuli came all the usual problems of raising an active young creature—and others besides. The story is wonderful and funny and sad: the intelligence of Kinuli herself, who quickly learned to recognize the author's footsteps, and who played like a puppy with young Tolya and his friends; her slow and grudging acceptance of the author's brother, Vasya, when he tried to live in *his* room after a vacation during which Kinuli had occupied it; the inevitable day when, as a grown young lioness, she had to return to the zoo.

(continued on back flap)



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by Vera Chaplina

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BY WAY OF A PREFACE

Vera Chaplina began to work at the Moscow Zoo at the age of fourteen. Her love for animals had helped her during a difficult period she spent in a children's home where she managed to keep, hidden under her bed, a succession of puppies, kittens and baby birds. At the zoo she cleaned cages and fed animals and, in her spare time, tamed some of her charges. She and other eager young biologists were instrumental in setting up the "New Territory," an area of big enclosures, artificial hills, spacious runs and a deep moat instead of bars. Among other projects was the unusual task of transforming a grassy hollow into a swamp. They transplanted reeds and herbs from nearby ponds, and then watered them several times a day. Their hard work was well rewarded when the plants took root and the hollow filled with water.

They spent whole days, and very often nights, at the zoo. Miss Chaplina's special interest was the baby animals, and

in 1933 she was put in charge of the zoo's motherless youngsters. It was a difficult task, and nowhere were there books telling how to raise a baby lynx or a hyena whelp. She learned by trial and, sometimes, error.

Miss Chaplina believed that young animals of all different species could be trained to live side by side peaceably. She began putting them together to play, and in a short time their games were delighting crowds of visitors. After this the zoo constructed a playground for young animals. A few years later she was appointed chief of the wild animals' section of the zoo, and the playground became part of this section.

Miss Chaplina worked at the zoo until 1946, after which she devoted increasingly more time to literary pursuits. Today she writes full time.

Over the years Miss Chaplina and her family played host at home to a number of animals—wolves, a leopard, a lynx and a lion cub named Kinuli. Kinuli in Russian means “abandoned,” and the cub had been abandoned by her mother. Her new home was the small apartment the author shared with her husband, Aleksandr Mikhailov (Shura), and their son, Anatolii (Tolya); and later the apartment of her brother, Vasilii Chaplin, which was off the same corridor—the “flat” of the story. And Kinuli became the special charge of the neighbors and their children. That is the setting of the true story that follows.

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I FOSTER CHILD

KINULI was a lion cub. She was born in the Moscow Zoo. I called her Kinuli because her mother abandoned her. Nobody knows what made the lioness refuse to feed her cubs. They crawled about the cage, squealing, and she passed by them as if she did not see them. On the second day of their lives three of the cubs died; but I took away the fourth, the very smallest, just in time to save her life.

The cub was quite cold and did not move. You might have thought she was dead, but for her feeble breathing. The first thing to do was to get her warm as quickly as possible. But I did not know how and where this could be done. Then I remembered that there was an incubator in the ostrich house. I hurried over, made room in the incubator, spread a cloth on one of the shelves, and put the cub on it.

I did not go home at all that day, but stayed to look after the baby. I rang up home, so that they should not

be worried and said, "Expect me tomorrow with a lion cub." There was a gasp. One of the neighbors took the receiver and raised such a hullabaloo when she heard I intended to bring a lion home that everyone came running up to see what was the matter. Then they began shouting all together that I ought to be turned out of the flat, that they would complain to the militia, and there was such a din and outcry that I stopped listening and hung up.

The next day I went home with my new baby.

It was raining, and very cold. I put the cub inside my coat to keep her warm, and got onto a trolley. I don't know whether it was the motion of the trolley, or whether the fur lining of my coat reminded the cub of her mother, but she suddenly began to fidget. I tried hard to quiet the baby by stroking it, but it was no good. She scratched me with her sharp claws in her efforts to get out, and suddenly gave a piercing mew, if the hoarse, long-drawn-out sound, like the creaking of a door, may be called mewing.

All heads were turned in my direction and all the passengers stared at me in astonishment. Not wishing to attract the conductor's attention, I hurried out onto the platform of the trolley. A man followed me there. He hemmed and hawed, and at last asked me what it was that had given such a strange cry from inside my coat. I showed him the cub and told him where she came from, asking him to say nothing about it, for fear I should be

put off the trolley. Apparently he did not keep his word, and before we reached Pushkin Square all the passengers came to have a look. Everyone wanted to get a glimpse of the lion cub, and when I was getting off the conductor leaned out and shouted after me, "Why didn't you show *me* the lion cub?"

So I had to show her to him.

Before going home I went to a pharmacy. I wanted a rubber nipple like the ones they feed babies with, only softer. I spent a long time looking for a suitable one. Some were too hard, some too big, some too small. The girl in the store showed me one after another. But I simply couldn't find the right one. At last the girl lost patience and told me that since I couldn't choose a nipple the mother had better come herself. So I had to tell her that the mother was a lioness in a cage, and couldn't come, and that every minute wasted might cost the cub its life. And by way of proof I showed her the lion cub.

I never expected this would make such an impression on her. In another minute every nipple in the shop lay on the counter before me. No doubt she had never before catered for a baby animal.

By our combined efforts we chose a suitable nipple, and I bore it off in triumph.

They were all expecting us at home, but I did not show the cub to anyone that day. I had to get a place

ready for her, to warm her and feed her. I had no box that would do. While my son Tolya cleared the things out of a suitcase I ripped the fur lining from my coat. It was rather like the lioness's fur and Kinuli lay quietly in it. The bodies of newborn animals do not accumulate sufficient heat. We have all seen a dog tucking her puppies beneath her to warm them with the heat of her body. The lion cub had no mother, so I put a bottle of hot water under the fur and the cub lay in this nest as if she were beside her mother.

The news that a lion was living in my room spread rapidly over the whole house. Strangers came to our door, sometimes alone, sometimes in groups, apologizing for the intrusion and asking to be shown the lion. They came cautiously into the room, but when they saw the lion cub they were rather disappointed—she was not a bit like a grownup lion. They inspected her long and earnestly, then thanked me, and went out as cautiously as they had come in. Before leaving they would advise me to be very careful, in case the lion ate me up when she grew bigger.

Everyone in the flat grew very fond of Kinuli, except Masha, my maid, who had taken a dislike to the cub from the first. She was opening the door to visitors all day long, and closing it after them, and she had to clean up the room, for Kinuli brought a lot of disorder into it. Our small room was turned into something between a nursery

and a laboratory; everywhere were cotton wool, Vaseline, boric acid, rubber nipples, syringes—in fact everything required for the bringing up of a baby.

I fed Kinuli every hour. As soon as she woke up I gave her a bottle of warm milk. It was a tiny bottle, containing not more than two tablespoons of milk, and I had to feed Kinuli very often, for she drank two pints of milk a day. To make it more like lion's milk I added diluted cream. The cub pawed the bottle contentedly and drank with loud sucking noises.

She required attention night and day.

When Kinuli slept, the whole flat was plunged in silence. Everyone went about on tiptoe and spoke in a

*Kinuli drank from
a baby's bottle*



whisper, and the children guarded the cub's slumbers just as well as the grownups did. The only one who did not care was Masha. She would bang the saucepans about on purpose and mutter, "Bringing all sorts of pests into the house." And the "pest" lay quietly in the suitcase, sucking her comforter. She sucked it so perseveringly, even in her sleep, that she rubbed her nose sore against the ring and the comforter had to be taken away. But Kinuli had gotten so used to it that she couldn't go to sleep at all, and kept nozzleing about with piteous cries.

The children saved the situation. Tolya, Lyona, Slavik, Galya and Yura took turns sitting up with Kinuli. To feed her and see that she did not cry they even drew up a list of those on duty. The children were very proud of the work entrusted to them, and boasted among their friends that they had a lion cub at home.

I began to look about for a dog. It was hard for me to take care of Kinuli by myself, and a dog would be a help. After a search I settled on Perry. Perry was a collie, and she lived in the Zoo. She was very kindhearted and docile. She never touched the animals, and once even suckled a dingo.

Perry was rather suspicious of the new baby. It was nothing like any other animal she had ever seen. When I put the lion cub next to her, Perry growled and tried to run away. She had to be held down by force. But gradu-

ally she got used to the strange nursling and began to wash her, which meant she had adopted Kinuli. There was no longer any danger that Perry would hurt or abandon her. And when strangers came up to them Perry would even give an anxious growl, as if afraid someone would hurt the cub. The dog had no puppies at the time, but the maternal instinct was suddenly aroused in her.

Kinuli now slept in a drawer of the wardrobe. I still put a bottle of hot water in her bed at nights, but I did not feed her so often. She began to grow—very slowly, it is true. I no longer feared that she would not live; the most dangerous period was over. I began going back to work again for an hour or two at a time. Masha was as cross as ever, and when I went out I left junior assistants to keep watch over the cub.

Kinuli opened her eyes when she was six days old. First the left eye, then the right. Her eyes were mere slits, and very bleary. Her ears began to stand up and her bright crimson lips turned paler. Kinuli always knew me. Whether she was drinking milk, sleeping, or resting beside Perry, I only had to stretch out my hand toward her and she would leave whatever she was doing and crawl over to me.

My little boy, Tolya, followed every movement of the cub. "Look, Mummy, look! Miaow-Miaow is licking my finger!" "She's crawling, Mummy, she turned her head."

Tolya was quite offended when I named the cub Kinuli. "But *we* love her, *we* haven't abandoned her!" he objected. "Let's call her Miaow-Miaow, or Blue Eyes." Kinuli's eyes really were blue. So blue that the iris could hardly be seen. Kinuli did not see well. When she went about the room she blundered into everything. She would bump her head against the leg of a chair and, not knowing how to get round it, would stand still for some time and then turn back. Kinuli waddled like a duck. Her paws got in her way and when she fell it was not on her side, but straight on to her back, like a mechanical toy.

Letters came to me every day from all over the Soviet Union. Children, old men, women wrote to me, people of all sorts of professions and occupations. They sent addressed envelopes for a reply, they sent their photographs, and poems about Kinuli, and they all asked for an answer.

The questions they asked!

Some were afraid Kinuli would eat us up. They asked how she behaved in the house and how long I intended to keep her. They asked me to talk about her more often over the radio and to be sure to write a book about her. There were even animal-lovers who asked where they could get another lion cub to bring up and, if this was impossible, what animal I advised them to adopt.

At first I tried to answer these letters, but I soon had to give up the attempt. There were so many of them that

there was no room for them in our letter box, and the postman complained that he worked for us alone.

Newspaper reporters were interested in Kinuli too. They visited us almost every day. They photographed Kinuli eating, drinking, sleeping, and having her fur washed by Perry.

Masha still grumbled about Kinuli, but not so much as before. She even began helping me, and one day suddenly told me not to call in assistants from the Zoo any more. "You trusted me with your child, and now you're afraid to trust a pest like that to me. Don't be afraid, I can look after it just as well as they can." And Masha really did look after Kinuli very well. She fed her strictly at regular hours, as she had fed Tolya when he was a baby. Her dishes shone, and the napkins she wiped the cub with were always freshly laundered. When Kinuli drank milk she braced her paws against Masha's hands, leaving deep scratches, but this did not make Masha angry. She even made diapers for Kinuli, and started calling her a tadpole instead of a pest.

The cub certainly had a very big head, her legs were short and thick, her body long. At first all her cries sounded the same to me, but soon I began to notice differences in them. I learned to know all Kinuli's moods from her cries—what she wanted, how she felt.

One day Kinuli fell ill. I noticed this while she was



Kinuli's favorite toy was a soccer ball

still quite jolly. My family laughed at me, telling me it was only my imagination. But I turned out to be right. The next day Kinuli lay in her bed and would not eat. She was ill for ten days. All that time I hardly slept at night, and kept jumping up, listening to her breathing, renewing the hot-water bottles. The neighbors would tap gently on the door in the mornings to ask how the invalid was.

When Kinuli recovered and got a little bigger I began letting her go out of the room. She walked calmly about the passage, bathroom and kitchen, and everyone

stepped carefully so as not to tread on her. Kinuli knew them all. She even had her likes and dislikes. She visited her favorites in their rooms, and showed them great affection; others she hissed at—especially one woman who had a loud, harsh voice which the cub did not seem to like. Kinuli knew the footsteps of everyone in the flat. One neighbor went away while Kinuli was quite tiny, and came back when she was two months old. When Kinuli heard her footsteps she started, slunk to the door with her ears twitching restlessly, and listened for a long, long time.

Kinuli knew my voice, my step, and the smell of me. The moment I came into the room she would run to me and start rubbing herself against me.

Kinuli was very high-spirited and loved playing. Sometimes the children would come to see her and stand outside the door, whispering into the keyhole, “Kinuli! Come here, Kinuli!” And Kinuli would leap up as if she understood and rush to the door. Getting onto her hind legs she would tug at the handle with one of her front paws, open the door, and bound into the passage. But there was no one to be seen—the children had hidden. Kinuli would start looking for them. She looked everywhere—in the bathroom, behind the doors, in the hall.

When she had found them it was her turn to hide. Her favorite place was behind the wardrobe. It was a tight fit, and she could hardly squeeze into it. The chil-

dren knew where the lion cub hid, but they knew they must not find her too soon or she would be offended, and refuse to play. The children would wander about, laughing and pretending they could not find her. "Where's Kinuli?" they would ask one another. "What's become of Kinuli?" And they would go on looking for her till she bounded out herself.

Their favorite game was "lion-hunting." The children would go out into the passage and form two groups, one at each end, and Kinuli stayed in the middle, lying low and waiting. Then Yura would run ever so fast past the cub. Kinuli would jump at him, like a cat at a mouse. If she caught him by the leg it meant the hunter was killed; if she only touched him, he was wounded; and if he got away, Kinuli had lost the game. But she very seldom lost, and when she was bigger she never missed—no one was quick enough for her.

Kinuli had lots of fun with the children. And how she pined when they went to the country for the summer! Tolya and Masha went away, too. Tolya wrote from the train, "Dear Mummy, I don't know whether to go on or come back, it's so dull without Kinuli." It was dull for Kinuli, too. She was used to romping and playing all day long, and now when I went to work she was alone with Perry, who was a quiet dog, and not very playful. Then I decided to bring a baby lynx as a companion for Kinuli.

II T A S K A

LIKE Kinuli, Taska was born in the Zoo. For the first two months her mother, a big yellow lynx, looked after her babies conscientiously, washing them, feeding them, and pouncing threateningly at the bars of the cage if any visitor ventured too near. The baby lynxes developed splendidly. They could already eat meat, and would come out of their house and play. When they did this a crowd would collect in front of the cage. Everyone wanted to watch the little creatures' gambols, and tried to get as near as possible, and perhaps this was why the mother started dragging her babies about. She picked one of them up in her teeth and dashed about the cage with it. The baby struggled and cried, the visitors shouted, but she would not drop it. By the time an attendant ran up it was too late—the baby lynx lay dead on the floor, and the mother had picked up the next one, which the attendant got away from her with great difficulty.

One of her front paws was broken, and there was a film over her injured eye. It was the weakest of all the baby lynxes, a puny, miserable little creature. She would hide in the house and stay there all day long.

The baby lynx was in such a wretched state that I decided to take her home. The next day, after obtaining the director's permission, I wrapped the baby up in a robe and carried her off. As I walked up the stairs to the door of my flat I could not help wondering what my reception would be. When I came into the room, Shura, my husband, looked up as if wondering what I had brought home this time. When I produced the baby lynx he fairly yelled at me, "What's that little horror? Isn't a lion enough for you? You'll be bringing an elephant home tomorrow."

This was too much for me. "In the first place, it's not a horror, it's a lynx. In the second place, if the room were a little bigger I would certainly bring an elephant!" Shura made no reply, but only turned away with a despairing gesture. The next minute, however, he began to help me make a place for the lynx.

We put her in a box, with a saucer of milk and some meat beside it, and then we covered the box with boards. The neighbors were told nothing about the new nursling. They were used to Kinuli and fond of her, but who could tell what they would say to a lynx?

As for my husband, he asked me all about lynxes, and then declared he would adopt the baby lynx. He would name her, look after her, tame her—if, of course, I had not deceived him, and it really was a lynx. The next morning Shura got out of bed as soon as it was light and hastened to have a look at his new baby. He was greatly

*inuli was lonely when
the children went away*



disappointed. The little lynx was not nearly so affectionate as he had thought she would be. During the night she had gnawed at the sides of her box and spilled her milk—the meat she had left untouched. When Shura put out his hand to stroke her, the baby lynx retreated into a corner and growled. And he was equally unlucky about a name for her. It was extremely difficult to find one. We had a long and heated argument. My husband wanted to call the baby lynx Murka or Muska, and I wanted to call her Taskali, from *taskat* [to drag], because her mother had dragged her over the floor. We settled on Taska.

Kinuli took the greatest interest in the box from which such strange sounds and smells came. She even lost her appetite. She walked round and round the box, sniffing at it, and when I lifted a board to put some food in for the lynx, Kinuli tried to peep inside. As she was a great deal bigger than the lynx I was afraid she might hurt her, and I put off introducing them to one another. But I need not have worried.

One day I forgot to cover the box, and the moment I turned away Kinuli appeared and stuck her head in the opening. The lynx was terrified. She tried to hide in a corner, and growled; but Kinuli took no notice of this. The lynx hissed and growled, but still Kinuli took no notice. Then the lynx, driven to despair, her eyes round with fright, suddenly leaped up and thrust her claws and

teeth into the lion cub's muzzle. Kinuli was so astonished that she made no attempt at resistance, and fled roaring from the room and along the passage, without a backward glance. She only recovered her senses in the kitchen, where she strode up and down, lashing her tail from side to side and mewing nervously. In the meantime the baby lynx had gone back to her corner where she stayed huddled up as if nothing had happened.

On the evening of that day a cage was brought from the Zoo, and the lynx cub was put into it. Taska did not like her new home. In the box there had been a dark corner to retreat to, to hide from people in, but here she was on view all the time. She gnawed at the bars, trying to break her cage and get away. All night long she uttered loud harsh cries, and in the morning the neighbors, who were not in on the secret, asked me what animal I had taken in now.

The next night Taska made still more noise. Her cries could even be heard out of doors. We covered the cage with a carpet, a blanket, a mattress and some pillows. In fact, all my bedclothes were used, but the sound of Taska's cries came through them and kept everyone awake. Then I put the cage out on the balcony, where it was quieter and where nobody ever went. But Taska was still afraid. She started at every rustle, every sound, and tried to hide; and when any of us cleaned her cage she

would jump at our hands, scratching and biting.

What didn't I do to try and tame the little savage! I fed her with my own hands, spent all my leisure time with her, and when I had to leave her I turned on the radio for Taska to get used to strange sounds.

Finally she got tamer, no longer flying at an outstretched hand, and even allowing herself to be touched.

We decided to let Taska out of her cage, to see what she would do. No one knew how a three-month-old savage from a cage in the Zoo would behave when it found itself in a room. Would Taska come out cautiously and hide, or would she dash about and look for a way of escape? I was very nervous. My hands actually shook as I opened the door of the cage. Then I moved away and waited. Taska sat there motionless, but the expression of her eyes became keener and she seemed to become tense. Then she relaxed, stretched, got up, and moved stealthily toward the door. For a long time she could not bring herself to cross the threshold. She put first one paw out, then another, listened, looked round. It was quite funny to watch her. She could easily have jumped out and run away, but instead she lingered in the doorway. I was just going to give her a shove when Taska suddenly stepped forward, and retreated. You might have thought her soft paw had touched a red-hot stove, and not a carpet, so terrified was Taska. Everything was new and alarming for her. She took

a few cautious steps over the carpet and stopped. Further on, came the parquet floor—gleaming, slippery, unfamiliar. Taska advanced and retreated several times. She was very, very careful, this little lynx. You might have thought she was in a dense forest and not in a room, and that danger lay in wait for her everywhere.

It took her some time to get used to her new situation. But liberty did its work, and very soon Taska changed out of all knowledge.

She was here, there and everywhere. There seemed to be not a single place she could not get into. She jumped from one cupboard to another, clambered over picture frames, and once actually scrambled out through the window and onto the ledge of the next-door window. In fact, she behaved as if she were living in a forest and not in a room. Soon she was bigger than her brothers in the Zoo. Her paws straightened out, her eyes became clear, and her coat shone like silk. Even her character changed. Formerly, when I came into the room, she would hiss and hide under the wardrobe. Now she ran to meet me, rubbed herself against my legs and purred. She purred exactly like a cat, only louder.

I fed her on boiled semolina, eggs and meat. And how she loved meat! It was her favorite food. She knew quite well when the time came round for her to have it. She became restless, hung around the door, uttered cries,

and the moment I came into the room rushed up to me, deftly catching the bits thrown to her in mid-air with one paw and tossing them into her mouth. She always ate her food under the wardrobe.

Before eating the meat she played with it—tossing it up or pushing it away from her and running after it, and the bit of meat seemed to come alive between her paws.

Taska was alone for a long time, and I could see she was lonely. She ran after me like a little dog, and when I went out of the room squealed shrilly. This was no longer the fierce beastie which had lost her mother, but a baby lynx, and like all little children she wanted companions. Then I made up my mind to try and make it up between Taska and Kinuli.

III FIGHTING FRIENDS

KINULI came into the room as if there had never been any lynx cub there. She went up to the edge of the carpet with a firm, confident step, and lay down. Remembering the first unlucky introduction, which had ended in a fight, I kept an old towel in readiness; but it was not needed. The round, roguish head of Taska peeped out from beneath the wardrobe, and her eyes followed the movements of the lion cub with by no means ill-natured curiosity. The behavior of these animals, so alike and yet so different, was interesting to watch. Kinuli lay quite still, nothing but her eyes moving, while Taska kept running past, touching her with her paw now and again; but if the lion cub so much as stirred, Taska darted under the wardrobe.

From now on I let them be together every day. Kinuli evidently had not forgotten the insult. She behaved as if she did not notice the lynx, while Taska now wanted to make friends. But they did not make friends for a long time. Many days passed before my nurslings

began to play together. At first they were very cautious, not touching each other, keeping at a distance. Taska would come bounding out from beneath the wardrobe, rush violently at the lion cub as if she were just going to knock her down, but at the last moment stop and utter something like an abrupt "h'm." This was quite an affectionate sound. It is the sound the mother makes when she calls to her little ones, and Taska was telling Kinuli that she did not intend to hurt her.

I would often sit watching their movements, listening to the sounds they made and trying to understand them. Sometimes I succeeded in this.

Why did Taska rush at the lion cub so noisily? Why did she always make for Kinuli's muzzle? Was it because she couldn't help it? Oh no! A lynx can slip past on its soft paws so quietly that the keenest ear cannot hear it, and it attacks its enemies from behind. But this was not an enemy. Nor was it a friend, either. They did not really know each other yet, did not trust each other. The lion cub might take fright, might strike, she must be warned. And Taska was warning. Watching them, I would say to myself: "These observations may come in handy. If I ever have to make friends with an animal I'll behave as they do." There is something to be learned from animals, too. I am always observing, always learning.

They came closer and more boldly up to one another

every day. The usual game was for Taska to attack Kinuli. Deft and active, she would leap round the lion cub like a rubber ball, nearer and nearer. And one day she jumped too far and fell on Kinuli. But no! I know Taska. She could not possibly have miscalculated. How many times, when I rolled a football on the floor, had she jumped straight on it from the table, spreading out her paws in mid-air and never once jumping too far or too short! Had she miscalculated this time? I was quite sure she had done it on purpose. But how nervous they were! They sprang away from each other, as if they had burned themselves. All of a sudden their eyes were terrified, round, angry. There'll be a fight now, I thought. But the little creatures paused for a moment, then calmed down and began playing. They were much more at their ease now. Sometimes one of them touched the other as if by chance, and then they stopped dead, looking searchingly at one another, and the game went on again.

That is how their acquaintance began. Acquaintance, not friendship. They were too different for that. Perhaps you are surprised at the idea of animals having incompatible temperaments. Is this really possible? Certainly it is. And yet I have known many animals quite different from one another who got on very well.

Four wolves lived in the same cage with a goat, eating, playing, and sleeping together. They often quarreled



Taska

among themselves, but never with the goat. And yet Kinuli and Taska could not get on.

Kinuli was quiet, even a little sluggish. She loved playing, but there must always be something for her to seize on and worry. It was hard to rouse her to anger, but still harder to conciliate her once she was angry. Kinuli remembered a grievance for a long time. If I hurt her

feelings she would turn away in a huff and not come up to me again for some days. Taska was quite different. She would flare up, attack, and bite—and then it was all over. She was full of surprises. Nobody could ever tell what she would do the next minute, or even second. Unlike Kinuli, Taska seldom showed affection. They played together very nicely, but never really understood each other, and they often had quarrels.

One day I gave Taska some meat. She grabbed at it and carried it up to Kinuli. Taska wanted to have a game before eating it. But Kinuli did not understand the hint. If you are given food, the thing to do is to eat it. She scooped up the meat with her paw, settled herself comfortably on the floor, and started to eat her lunch. When Taska heard the crunching of the bones she was very much upset. Her slender body expressed astonishment in every line. What was the matter? Why had Kinuli done this? Taska had only brought the meat up to her for fun. She circled around Kinuli, watched her moving the jaws, listened to the crunching. She even tried to take the meat back, but Kinuli flattened her ears and gave such a roar that Taska leaped back, her eyes wicked and angry. I snatched up a towel in the nick of time. Taska could not endure the slight. She bristled all over and rushed at Kinuli with doglike growls. I had to interfere.

Another time Kinuli was lying on the sofa with her

tail hanging down. Taska took it for the velvet fringe on the sofa and bit so that it hurt. Again a quarrel. And this sort of thing happened several times a day.

It was always Taska who was the offender. She could not leave Kinuli alone, was always pulling her tail or leaping round her. Poor Kinuli's head swam. She would hide under a chair, but Taska would jump onto the seat and aim at her from above. Sometimes Kinuli took offense and went back to her own room. But Taska would be after her in a minute. She never went straight into the room where Kinuli lived. First there appeared her shadow, long and narrow, then one pointed ear and a round eye. Then all these things disappeared, and a few minutes later Taska bounded into the middle of the room uttering a friendly "h'm" as if nothing had happened.

Kinuli was bolder in her own room. She did not fear the lynx so much there, did not shrink into a corner, and if Taska teased her too much, did not hesitate to give her a box on the ear. Taska did not like this at all. The little rascal would try and lure Kinuli into her own room.

She was up to all sorts of tricks. Sometimes, tired of playing, she would pretend to be going away. Sticking up her stumpy tail she would make resolutely for the door. Kinuli would run ahead of Taska and try to stop her. Then Taska would lure her to the door of her own room, just for the sake of scratching her. They had to be separated

with the help of a towel, the lynx driven back to her room and Kinuli led away. Then they missed each other. Taska would scratch at the door and gnaw it with her sharp teeth, uttering cries that could be heard all over the flat. Taska's cries upset Kinuli. She would pace up and down the room, listening, and struggling to get back to Taska. I put them together again, and soon another quarrel began.

CO. SCHOOLS

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It became more and more difficult with every day to keep the lynx in a room. She gnawed and tore everything she came across. She jumped about, squeezed herself in wherever she could, made a mess all over the place. We had long before removed everything we could, but this did not prevent her from gnawing at the legs and backs of chairs and tearing the upholstery of the sofa to pieces—even the carving on the bookshelves bore the marks of her sharp teeth. We had to consider taking Taska back to the Zoo. At first Shura would not hear of this, and asked me to leave Taska and send away Kinuli. But when Taska tore a new curtain and even managed to dirty a picture, he agreed to give her up.

A big, spacious cage was gotten ready for her at the Zoo. It was thoroughly scrubbed, the floor was strewn with sand, and a thick branch was put up in it for Taska to climb onto. Very soon an attendant was to come and fetch her away. But it was not to be.

One morning Taska did not rush to greet me when I went into the room, and did not answer when I called her.

It was strangely quiet in the room, so quiet that I was frightened. "Could she have jumped out of the window?" was my first thought. I took a few steps into the room and...there was Taska lying in an unnatural posture near the sofa, a strip of fringe wound tightly round her throat. Perhaps she had gotten choked by the fringe while running past or playing with it; however that may be, the short life of little Taska had come to a sudden end.

Kinuli felt terribly lonely all by herself. There was no one for her to gambol with. She begged to be taken to Taska, cried, walked backwards and forwards past the closed door, even butted it with her head. But I would not let her into the room. It had first to be scrubbed, put in order, aired. The statuettes were put back, the curtains and draperies hung up, and the room became cosy once again. Nothing in it spoke of Taska. And yet I could not forget her, and whenever I went into the room I imagined I saw her long, narrow shadow. Kinuli remembered the little lynx, too. Three weeks later, when for the first time I let Kinuli into the room, she flew in as if the three weeks had not passed, as if the playful Taska were lurking behind every corner. But there was no Taska. Kinuli looked for her under the wardrobe, the table, the bed. She

looked everywhere that the lynx could possibly have hidden, but she could not find her. Kinuli was left all alone.

The loss of her friend made Kinuli despondent. She had no appetite, lay down all day with her head between her paws and very seldom got up.

We did our best to distract her. We bought a new ball, all sorts of toys. One of the neighbors gave her a pair of old slippers, another brought his phonograph to amuse her. There is something rather unusual in the combination of a lion and a phonograph. When it began to play Kinuli was terrified, and shrank into the farthest corner, refusing to come out. But curiosity won the day.

Kinuli gazed long at the unfamiliar object. She walked round it, smelled it, treated it as if it were alive. She tried to frighten it. Coming close up to it, she roared, stamped, and waited to see if the phonograph was afraid. But the phonograph was not a bit afraid and did not run away—just stayed where it was. Kinuli calmed down.

It was very curious to note her reaction to different tunes. She certainly knew them apart. Some she liked, others she did not. When the foxtrot "Life" was put on, Kinuli came quite near and lay down. But suddenly a man's voice sang out. Kinuli looked over her shoulder and hissed.

She listened attentively to a waltz, but ran away as soon as the chorus struck up. She was afraid of many

voices singing together, and always ran away from them onto the balcony.

The balcony was Kinuli's favorite retreat. If we chased her back into the room and closed the door, she would get up on her hind legs and push at the handle with her front paws till the door came open. There was so much to interest her on the balcony. She could climb up onto a chair and watch the children playing in the yard, and the cars and horses coming in. From the second story everything looked so tiny, ever so much smaller than it really was. There goes a car just like Tolya's toy that Kinuli used to play with! Kinuli would leap up and rush along the balcony after it.

But the car disappeared. Kinuli looked after it sadly, and the children down below laughed at her. "He gave you the slip, Kinuli!"

IV NEW WORLDS

SOON after, my brother Vasya, whose room was next to ours, went away for his vacation. His room was big and full of light, with a balcony, and I decided to move into it temporarily with Kinuli and Perry. They took the move quite differently. Perry got under the table at once and went to sleep, but Kinuli walked about the room, sniffing at everything, inspecting everything. At last, her curiosity satisfied, she lay down. We spread a rug for her at the door, but she would have none of it and took up her quarters near the balcony door. I chased her away several times, fearing she would catch cold, but Kinuli always went back, and this became her favorite place.

She woke up very early, while we were still asleep. Shura and I slept on the balcony, and at the first sound of my voice Kinuli ran to the door and started mewing and scratching at it and pulling herself up to try and see me through the glass panels.

She very soon discovered what to do, however, and learned to push an armchair up to the door. It was a very heavy one, even I could hardly move it, but Kinuli found a way. She would back up, run forward, and push it with her paws. Then she would back up again, and give it another shove. When it was close against the door she jumped onto the seat and looked through the door. There she could watch me in comfort. She was afraid of Shura and left him alone. But she would always jump onto my bed, rubbing against my head and inviting me to play with her.

Very often, so as to get a little more rest, I would shut my eyes and pretend to be asleep; but it was no good. There was Kinuli, dragging the blanket off me. How she tormented me!

In the daytime, when the balcony was bathed in sunlight, Perry would come out to warm her old bones, and Kinuli to watch the people in the street and take a sunbath. She would lie right in the sun, always on her back, but she kept her head in the shade.

When the shade moved, Kinuli moved with it. She would lie a long time, for several hours, and I was very glad, for sunlight is good for baby beasts, too.

By now I was spending the whole day at work, only coming home during the lunch hour to feed Kinuli.

As soon as I put the key into the lock Kinuli knew

who it was. She met me at the door, jumping, rubbing against me. Sometimes she lay down at my feet, embracing them with her paws and licking my shoes. She was even jealous of Perry, and would never let her come to me to be stroked. As soon as I put out my hand Kinuli got between us. Perry was a wise, self-controlled dog and always gave in. She would wag her tail from afar and go away. But not Kinuli. She would not eat if you did not first stroke her. Sometimes I was in a hurry to go back to work, my lunch hour was nearly over, but I had to stay to stroke

Kinuli loved to lie in the sun



and pet her. Then I thought to myself: why tire myself out? I'll ask Xenia Stepanovna to look in on Kinuli while I am away, and feed her.

Xenia Stepanovna had been our neighbor for a long time. She was seventy-six, and we all called her Granny. She was a good-natured old woman, always ready to oblige, and everyone loved her. Kinuli, too, soon grew very fond of her. The second time she saw her she got into her lap as she sat down, and began playing. Sometimes she accidentally tore her stocking or her apron, but Granny was never cross. She even tried to keep this from me, in case her pet should get a scolding. She loved Kinuli. Sometimes she gave her an extra drink of milk, always washing the saucer carefully afterwards.

But still I worried when I was away. Supposing Kinuli opened the balcony door, got out and fell into the yard? The railings were very wide apart, and the cub could easily get through them. When I left the house, I always tried the door several times to see that it was properly closed. I remember the fright I got once. When I went into the room Kinuli was nowhere to be seen, and the balcony door was open. My hands and knees shook; I was afraid to look over the balcony—what if Kinuli lay dead in the yard? And all the time she was hiding behind the door. She had only wanted to play hide-and-seek. But she could not keep it up long, and as soon as I turned my

back she jumped at me, butting me with her muzzle and rubbing against me.

After this we stretched wire netting in front of the railings, to be on the safe side.

Kinuli knew the exact hour when I ought to be back from work. She would wait nervously, listening to every sound. Because of her I could never go anywhere. Once I went to the country for two days, and when I came back I found everyone in great perturbation. Kinuli had eaten nothing all the time I was away. And how glad she was to see me! She would not let me out of her sight the whole day long. If I went to the door, Kinuli went after me and clasped my ankles in her paws to prevent me from going out. Granny looked at her and shook her head: "You mischievous imp! You only want to run after your mummy!" Naturally she did—who else was there for her to play with? In the winter there had been the children, but now they were all away, and Kinuli was bored. True, there was Perry, but Perry was no playmate—she slept all day long under the table. Kinuli would try to pull her out by the tail, or reach at her with a paw, but Perry only turned over and went to sleep again.

When Kinuli was three months old I decided to start taking her for walks. I made a kind of harness from a leather strap and put it on her ever so gently. I had never



*Kinuli at
three months*

imagined she would be so angry when the collar confined her neck. She was simply terrified. She roared, strained at the leash, then began tugging at the leather with her teeth; and of course the more she tugged the tighter grew the collar. Kinuli was in a frenzy. She rolled on the floor, growled, beat the air with her paws. I had the greatest difficulty in taking off the collar, and even then she dashed about the room and could not calm down. An hour later I put the harness on her again. Very gently,

tickling her tummy, I fastened the buckle. Kinuli tried to wriggle out of the collar, but it did not worry her so much as before, and she soon quieted down. A few minutes later, Kinuli, Perry and I were out in the street.

Kinuli was terrified. From the window everything had looked so tiny and far away, and now it was all so big and terrifying. At first the poor little thing was almost paralyzed with fear, but soon she began to struggle and scratch and cry in her efforts to get free. She lay on her back, refusing to move; or she darted suddenly to one side, dragging me after her. Not to frighten her more than I could help, I gave her as much freedom as possible, going wherever she pulled me and doing my best to quieten her down with caresses. Perry tried as hard as I did. The wise old dog helped in her own way. She walked quietly beside Kinuli, as if they were in double harness, and when Kinuli seemed particularly upset, or came to a stop, Perry licked her muzzle and gave her a gentle shove with her nose.

And so gradually, day by day, we trained Kinuli to go for walks. I deliberately took her into the street, so that she should get accustomed to noises and people and should not grow up such a wild creature. And very soon she really did get used to the noise of the street. She walked beside me like a big, docile dog, so quietly that people did not always notice her.

But if anyone *did* see that she was a lion, what a to-do there was! In less than a second we were surrounded by interested spectators. It was usually the militiaman who came to our rescue. He would appear suddenly, make his way toward us, take a good look at the strange beast, and enter upon his duties. This, however, was no easy matter. The crowd would only disperse after we had taken shelter in a doorway. Sometimes we came across dogs in our walks. Every dog behaved in its own way. Some rushed at Kinuli barking furiously, others instantly took to their heels, but none of them dared to touch her. One day we met a woman with a dog trotting beside her. It was a snubnosed lapdog, with short legs and long silky hair. It walked solemnly beside its mistress with a blue bow on its neck.

Suddenly it caught sight of Kinuli. It probably took her for a big dog. It growled, stood still, and then plunged forward with furious barking and flung itself upon Kinuli. It discovered too late that this was no dog.

Poor little doggie! You should have seen it! Its perky aggressiveness turned to dismay, its eyes bulged with terror, but it could not turn back and ran squealing full tilt into Kinuli. It fell back, but was up in a moment and tore off madly, galloping along the middle of the road with its tail between its legs, and its mistress running after it, trying in vain to overtake it.

Kinuli gazed in mild surprise after the blue bow till it disappeared round a corner, then, turning her head lazily, she yawned and continued her walk with slow dignity. Kinuli could not walk very long. After about an hour and a half she would beg to be taken home. She knew the way to our flat and would bound swiftly up the stairs and scratch at the door.

After a walk Kinuli's appetite improved. She got eggs for breakfast. She would pick up her bowl in her teeth and bring it to me. I would break the eggs into the bowl and place it in front of Kinuli. Perry had her breakfast at the same time. They ate side by side, each from her own bowl. Kinuli always finished first. She would clean up the empty bowl with her tongue, which was as rough as a nutmeg grater, but she never attempted to take Perry's food away from her. Perry ate slowly, taking a long time over her meal. When she had finished she would go just as slowly up to the lion cub and lick its muzzle clean. Then they would both take a nap, lying side by side.

My friends often asked me if Kinuli had ever been filmed. "Why," they said, "perhaps this is the only case of a lion being brought up in a house! What a pity she hasn't been filmed!" And I was sorry, too, of course. There was so much of interest, it would have been nice to have it all filmed. But I had no camera and I did not know where



*Kinuli liked to look
at herself in the mirror*

to go to have a film taken. An opportunity soon presented itself, however. A film was being made in the Zoo. When the producer learned that I had a lion in my flat he offered to film it. Needless to say I gladly gave my consent.

The producer wrote a scenario and came on a day when I did not go to work, to shoot the film. The camera-

man brought the film and camera, the producer a tripod and a funny sort of box. Loaded from head to foot, they appeared for the first time in our flat. After relieving themselves of their burdens, they went to make the acquaintance of the "star."

Kinuli received the newcomers with distrust. She sniffed for a long time at their clothes and boots before allowing herself to be touched. It was impossible to film her that day. Kinuli needed time to get accustomed to the strangers before she could get rid of her fear of them and be at her ease. And so the cameraman and the producer sat on the floor for hours tempting her with bits of meat and trying to win the confidence of the four-legged "star." This was very, very difficult. When I was there Kinuli took no notice of them; when I went out of the room she would not go near them, and would not even take meat from their hands. But in the end they won—Kinuli was no longer shy, and the filming could begin.

Everything was set up beforehand. The camera was screened off by a row of chairs with a blanket hung over them. The cameraman hid behind this screen. It was the only way, for though Kinuli was tame she was still as suspicious as a wild beast. When everything was ready Kinuli and Perry were let into the room. Perry had to be there to keep Kinuli calm—without Perry, Kinuli would not have played. According to the scenario she had to lie

quietly on the sofa. She jumped on to it willingly enough, but the rattling noise of the camera alarmed her, and she ran away. And here our troubles began. Kinuli simply would not be filmed. We could not make her come nearer. Neither scoldings nor pleadings were any good. Some way of drowning the noise of the camera had to be found.

Suddenly I remembered that Kinuli was very fond of music and would lie for hours beside the phonograph, quite oblivious to what was going on around her. So we put the phonograph next to the camera. The familiar sounds of dance music drowned the rattling of the camera, and Kinuli at once felt at her ease. She played, ate, drank, lay on the sofa, and did everything she was asked to. The cameraman was delighted. He photographed Kinuli while the producer wound up the phonograph and changed the records.

There was not enough light in the room to take good pictures. The sun moved, and we had to follow it with tables, chairs, "star" and all. Then Kinuli would not pose, or the camera was in the wrong place. In fact we had nothing but trouble. And things were no better with Perry. They did manage to film Kinuli, with the aid of music, but nothing could be done with Perry. She had once been photographed indoors and terrified by the flash. Ever since, the moment she caught sight of a camera she would lie on her back, shut her eyes, and play possum.

But gradually all the difficulties were overcome. Kinuli was filmed eating, playing with Perry, bringing her bowl, drinking milk from a bottle. She was filmed in the yard, playing with the children. They were fortunate to get a picture of Kinuli with her bottle, for a few days later she swallowed the rubber nipple.

I came back from work one day to be greeted at the door by Granny, with the tearful exclamation, "Vera Vasil'yevna! Oh, my dear! The nipple!"

I couldn't understand what she was trying to tell me.

"What's the matter? What nipple?" At last I managed to get at the truth. Kinuli had pulled the nipple off the bottle and swallowed it.

"Before I could turn around..." said Granny, weeping.

In spite of this, Kinuli felt splendid, gamboling and playing as usual. But I could not help worrying. Who could say how it would end? I had seen many cases of animals dying after swallowing rubber articles. Rubber cannot be digested. It swells inside, sometimes causing a stoppage, and the animal dies. The same thing might happen to Kinuli. Besides, Kinuli could not drink milk from a saucer, or rather she would not. She lapped up soup or porridge from her bowl beside Perry, with the greatest of ease, but simply refused to drink milk except from a bottle. A nipple had to be bought in a hurry. But Kinuli would not use it. The moment she felt it in her

mouth she spat it out, sniffed at it, and turned away.

I lost my temper, picked up the naughty little thing, and stuffed the nipple into her mouth. But Kinuli wriggled out of my grasp, spat out the nipple, would not keep it in her mouth for a moment. I understood what was wrong. The old nipple had felt, smelt and tasted quite different. Kinuli was used to it and behaved to the new one as if it were a new mother. Try as I might boiling it first in water, to soften it, then in milk, to take away the taste of rubber, she would not have it. Kinuli cried with hunger, would not eat meat, and would not drink milk from the new nipple.

Three days passed, and for three days Kinuli ate nothing. And only on the fourth day, when she was really hungry, did she begin to drink milk from the new nipple. But she did not have it for long. The very next day she swallowed it, too. It was her last rubber nipple, for after this I never bought any more. And gradually Kinuli learned to drink milk out of a basin.

V MOVIE STAR

TOLYA, Masha and my brother Vasya came back from the South in September. I went back to my own room, intending to take Kinuli with me. But she had gotten so used to Vasya's room that she didn't want to go. She would come into our room, play about for a little while, and ask to go back, scratching at the door and crying to be let out. We had to ask Vasya to let Kinuli live in his room. Vasya consented. He loved animals and didn't mind keeping a lion cub a bit. But the cub minded. Kinuli disliked strangers intensely. And here was a stranger intruding in *her* room. Vasya's arrival disturbed her peace, and Kinuli took a strong dislike to him. She expressed it in her own way. Even my brother's things annoyed her.

The first day it was his suitcase which suffered. Vasya left it on the floor when he went to see us. When he got back the suitcase was open, its contents scattered all over the floor. Kinuli had torn up one shirt and was beginning on another. Vasya tried to get it away from her, but could

not. Kinuli refused to give it up, snarling and striking out at his hand with her paw, her long, terrible claws unsheathed.

In the night it was no better. Vasya went to bed, and Kinuli walked round and round him, dragging off now the blanket, now the pillow, so that he could not sleep. Vasya gathered up his bedclothes in a bundle and sat on them. He sat up all night, and the next night decided to sleep on the table. But that was not much better.

After Vasya had left, I came into the room and scarcely recognized it. The air was filled with feathers and down. There was a torn mattress on the floor, and Kinuli was finishing up the last of the pillows in a corner. What was to be done? My brother would be very angry when he came back. I rushed for a needle and thread and started stitching everything up. It did not take me long, but it was no easy matter to gather up the feathers. I caught at them in mid air and stuffed them into the pillow-case, but they flew out again. I was exhausted, but what did Kinuli care? She ran after me, getting in my way and thrusting her muzzle wherever she could. It was all good fun for her.

My brother once went out of the room, leaving his radio set, which he was repairing, on the table. Kinuli immediately jumped onto the table and knocked it off with her paw. When Vasya came back his set was nothing but a heap of chips.

There was no end to the things Kinuli spoiled. She tore up coats and curtains. Vasya dared not leave anything within her reach. When he was called to the telephone in the passage he had to take his bedclothes with him. The neighbors would laugh at him. "Your lodger doesn't give you much peace, does she?" But Vasya never got angry with his lodger. He was always patient and affectionate with the cub and did everything to win her confidence. He had loved the little crosspatch from the very first day, and never lost an opportunity to stroke and pet her, very gently, so as not to alarm her.

I purposely saw less of her now, and Vasya looked after her and fed her himself. In about a fortnight Kinuli began to get fond of him. She did not go to him of her own accord, but she no longer snarled at him, and allowed him to touch her. It was a long time before she showed him affection. She began by going up to him, lying down at his feet, and every now and then rubbing her head against them, as if by accident.

But once Vasya went to the country and did not come home that night. Kinuli was greatly upset, running about the rooms, mewing and listening.

Vasya came back the next morning. Kinuli heard his footsteps in the passage. She got the door open and rushed to him, hugging his ankles with her paws and rubbing against him for a long time.



Perry, Kinuli and Vasya watch Tolya feed a puppy

Kinuli and Vasya became inseparable friends. Vasya spent all his spare time at home. There was nothing he would not do to amuse Kinuli. He played ball and hide-and-seek with her. There was nowhere to hide, so he would get into the wardrobe, calling out, "Kinuli, where am I? Kinuli!" Kinuli would look everywhere, listening, or would crouch, waiting. The moment Vasya stuck out his head she was there, jumping up to him, asking to be petted, catching at his legs. Vasya taught her to stay on

the seat of a chair while he moved it about the room. Kinuli would jump onto the seat, leaning against the back of the chair. Vasya would move the chair about the room while she sat there, very dignified, looking about her proudly.

At that time Vasya was working at a factory. He got up early, at seven o'clock. Kinuli always waked him. Very carefully, with her claws sheathed, she would slap him with her paws, lick his hair and face. Her tongue was as rough as a nutmeg grater, and left a red mark on his skin. But Vasya bore it all and never forgot to pet her before going to work.

All through September the weather was bad. It rained most of the time, and if the sun did come out it was only for a few minutes. Kinuli could not go out. She stayed at home thoroughly bored, for there was no one for her to play and romp with. Perry lay under the table almost all day and when she did come out, crept back the moment Kinuli began to tease her. But at last the sun came out again. We decided to take advantage of this and have Kinuli filmed out of doors.

We all got up early that day. I was nervous, and Kinuli became infected with my nervousness. She refused her meat, fretted, mewed. By ten o'clock everyone was ready. The producer and cameraman had arrived.

Vasya, Kinuli, Perry and I were to go by car to the

place settled upon for the filming, and the rest by subway.

A taxi was waiting for us in the yard. When the driver saw me bring out a lion cub, he cried out and slammed the door of his car. Not having been warned, he had certainly not expected such a passenger. Before he could recover from the shock, Vasya quickly opened the other door, helped Kinuli, Perry and me in, and himself got in beside the driver. The driver was so bewildered that he could not find a word to say. Bending over the wheel and glancing back nervously at the restless lion cub, he drove cautiously out of the yard. Kinuli was at first alarmed at the unaccustomed movement and the noise of the engine. She darted from the window to the door, trying to get out. Then she calmed down and began looking out of the window. The driver calmed down, too. All the way he kept asking me about Kinuli, her life at home, her temper, her habits. "You should write a book," he advised me. And when I told him I *was* writing a book he was still more interested.

We were so absorbed in our talk that we hardly noticed the distance to Kropotkin Street, where we were all to meet. The others had not arrived, and we had to wait for them. Kinuli lay quietly on the seat. She could not be seen from outside, and nobody bothered us. Once a man came up to hire the taxi, caught sight of Kinuli, and made off quickly, without looking back. We got out of the car

when the others arrived and everything was ready for the filming. A lion cub so near the subway station immediately attracted the attention of the passersby, and in a few moments we found ourselves in the center of a dense circle of inquisitive onlookers.

Kinuli made a terrific stir in the street. Conductors and drivers leaned out of their trams, the passengers jumped out. Children ran up from all directions.

But this was nothing to what awaited us in Petrovka Street.

The car had hardly stopped when a crowd surrounded us, and when we got out the excitement was indescribable. The militiamen and street cleaners could do nothing. In the space of a minute the pavement, the whole street, was crowded. People looked out of windows, came out onto balconies, little boys shouted, "Lion! Lion!"

All traffic was held up. Buses, taxis and cars came to a stop. The drivers did not even try to go on. Newspaper reporters and amateur photographers sprang up from goodness knows where. Their cameras clicked, and it was impossible to start filming Kinuli.

Four times we pretended to go away, four times we skirted the street by side streets and came back; but nothing could be done. With the greatest trouble a few feet showing Kinuli walking along the pavement were shot, and then we all went home.

The next day there was a notice in the paper: "An interesting sight could have been observed in Petrovka Street yesterday—the filming of the young lioness Kinuli." Then followed a description of the shooting. The paragraph ended: "The filming of Kinuli aroused great interest among passersby. The car which took Kinuli back was escorted by bicycles, motorcycles and cars right up to the home of V. Chaplina, a member of the staff of the Zoo, who has brought up the cub from the day of its birth."

The film starring Kinuli was ready by the 7th of November, the anniversary of the Revolution. Our whole family was invited to the preview. Of course Kinuli and Perry were invited too. Since the time of the shooting Kinuli had been in a car several times, and when the taxi drove up to our door she got in by herself, settling comfortably on the seat, and looking round placidly. But the driver wrapped his scarf round his neck before speeding off—this was a very alarming fare.

When we went into the auditorium everyone jumped up, crying: "The lion's come! The lion's come!" There was much shouting and excitement. But Kinuli did not turn a hair. She got onto a seat and lay down in a relaxed attitude.

The lights went out, and the film projector began rattling. The unfamiliar sound alarmed our Kinuli, who gave

a roar and turned toward the sound. Then she glanced at the screen, saw herself, and sat very, very still and alert. Perry looked, too, at first, but soon curled up and went to sleep. Kinuli responded to everything she saw on the screen. Suddenly she saw her own ball there. Her very own ball! This was too much for Kinuli, she jumped off the seat and was close up to the screen in a couple of bounds, jumping up to it and trying to get hold of her beloved toy. I got her back with difficulty. Kinuli watched the rest of the picture attentively, never taking her eyes off the screen, and even after the lights were turned on continued to look at it. Then she stretched and yawned luxuriously.

That day she slept even more soundly than usual, though she started several times in her sleep and shifted her paws. Perhaps she was dreaming that she had caught the ball.

Then Kinuli and Tolya were invited to a children's matinee.

This time, too, things did not go quite smoothly. When the car came for Kinuli it turned out she was locked in her room. Hearing my voice she had tried, as usual, to open the Yale lock with her paw, but accidentally let the catch slip. The lock had to be broken.

The children greeted Kinuli with such loud cries of joy that she was terrified and rushed out and down the

stairs again, almost knocking me over. It took me a lot of trouble to get her back into the hall. But now the children kept quiet, and Kinuli recovered her composure. I sat down, Kinuli and Perry at my feet, and all round us the children. They examined every hair on the lion cub, its eyes, its powerful paws, its rounded ears. Kinuli was unusually calm and even allowed the children to touch her. The children lined up, gently stroking in turn the animal's soft fur.

The next day we treated Kinuli to a drive around Moscow as a reward for her good behavior. We took her along the most interesting streets, showed her the festively decorated city and the illuminations. Kinuli never took her eyes from the window all the time. At one point our taxi was overtaken by a car in which there were some foreigners. Seeing the lion, they drove alongside of us for a long time, trying to show us by gestures that they recognized Kinuli.

We got home late. Kinuli had begun to show signs of nervousness, and the car had hardly drawn up in front of the house when she got the door open and streaked up the stairs. Perry and I had difficulty in keeping up with her. I thought Perry was just as astonished as myself at the hasty flight of our nursling. And the nursling was already in the flat, almost knocked down a woman in the hall, and ran into the room, where she immediately squatted on her sandbox. She was very clean.

VI GROWING PAINS

IN the autumn Kinuli fell ill. Her illness was long and serious. She lay there very melancholy, eating nothing, and when she tried to get to her feet fell back with loud roars of pain. She only calmed down when we warmed her with an electric heater. She turned first one side to it, and then the other, and actually pulled it nearer with one paw, without burning herself. And yet Kinuli got worse every day.

A doctor was called. At first he was afraid to go into the room. The patient was a very unusual one—a wild beast, after all! Supposing it were to attack him? A place had to be screened off with chairs before the doctor would agree to go in. Kinuli was so ill that she simply did not notice him. She did not even open her eyes, and lay there on her side, breathing heavily. The doctor looked at her

from a respectful distance, and advised dosing her with castor oil. He hurried away without so much as examining her.

We sent for other doctors. They each prescribed something different, but were all agreed on one point—Kinuli would not recover, whatever was done for her.

Kinuli's illness was reported in the newspapers. And the letters I got at that time, the questions put to me, the amount of advice I received, were something tremendous. Most of the letters came from children: "How is Kinuli?" "Is she getting better?" "What do the doctors say?" People kept coming to inquire after her. Complete strangers shared our anxiety. Even the children in the yard were less noisy than usual. I often heard them hushing a comrade who was making too much noise. They were continually running in to ask after Kinuli.

We did everything we could to save the cub. Someone was on duty the whole time. I forgot what sleep meant. I was almost dizzy with fatigue, and yet I could not go away and rest. If I so much as moved in the direction of the door Kinuli strained after me, mewing plaintively, as if she were calling out "ma-ma-ma." And every time I had to go back. The nights were interminable. It was perfectly still in the room, and nothing could be heard but the ticking of the clock and Kinuli's irregular breathing.

Kinuli was ill for three weeks. For three weeks she

battled with death. For three weeks I had to feed her by force. With the utmost difficulty I would push a piece of meat into her mouth and try to get her to swallow it. Kinuli did not want to eat. She turned away her head and spat out the food. Sometimes we tried persuasion. The whole family pleaded with her—Vasya, Shura, even little Tolya.

“Eat, Pussy!” he begged her. “Just a tiny bit!” And added softly, “A teeny-weeny bit! All you have to do is to swallow it.”

Whether our pleadings had their effect on Kinuli, or whether she simply wanted to get rid of us, I don’t know, but she *did* eat—just a little.

We were aided in our efforts by a fly—an ordinary fly which was waked up by the warmth and started feeding beside Kinuli. It crept under her very nose and warmed itself at the electric heater. Kinuli detested this fly. The moment it appeared she would snarl angrily, hitting out at it with her paw, and actually ate to prevent her enemy getting the food—very little, it is true, but still it was something. Naturally we were delighted to have such an ally.

After a time Kinuli began to recover, very slowly. She still had a poor appetite, and could not get up, but she began making attempts to play. She played chiefly with a wooden spoon and her ball. She rolled the ball with her nose, or clasped the spoon between her paws, lying on her back and holding it in front of her for a long time. It would

be hard to say why these were the things she liked to play with most. We only had to say "ball" for her eyes to light up, and at the word "spoon" she lay on her back at once. Perry was the first to notice the signs of the cub's recovery. When Kinuli roared and writhed with pain the dog was afraid of her and hid under the table, refusing to go near her. But as soon as she began to get better Perry again came to sleep beside her, searched her coat solicitously for fleas, and washed her face. And when, one day, Vasya burst into the room and told us that Kinuli had torn his new trousers and a book left on the table, everyone was delighted, for it meant that Kinuli was well again.

After her recovery, a new collar was made for Kinuli, and I decided to take her out for a walk. I was afraid she would be very nervous after such a prolonged interval. But either because Kinuli had grown up, and people no longer seemed so big to her, or because she had become more sensible, she behaved very well, walking about the streets as quietly as Perry did.

I went into the yard with her. The children no longer greeted her as they used to. Some of the bravest held their hands out toward her, but mothers snatched up their babies and whisked them away. Inquisitive passersby came into our little yard, asking the children and the neighbors about Kinuli. Exclamations of astonishment could be heard, and

the superintendent was envied for having such a tenant.

The tenant had now grown very big and changed greatly. Kinuli's muzzle had lengthened, and was like a full-grown lion's. Her newly grown whiskers made her look quite different, and only two little moles and a tiny spot on her nose reminded us of the former Kinuli. It was almost impossible, looking at her, to believe that this was that same little creature that could literally be held on the palm of one's hand. Now this "little" creature was bigger than Perry, and could hardly get under the table or sit on a chair.

But though she was now so big, her habits remained the same. She gamboled up to me as violently and affectionately as she used to when little bigger than a kitten. The only difference was that now I had to lean against the wall, or the caresses of the "kitten" might have knocked me over. Kinuli played very carefully with my hand, taking it right into her mouth or licking it, and never once did she hurt me. If she forgot herself for a moment I only had to raise my voice ever so little, and she instantly dropped my hand.

Kinuli was remarkably sensitive to intonations. She might be up to some mischief, breaking something for instance, but if she heard Vasya's footsteps she would be under the table in a moment, and hide there, waiting to see what would happen. If Vasya came in in a bad temper

and began scolding her, she would stay there; but if he seemed good-humored she would spring up and put her front paws on his chest, or lie down and rub her head against his foot. She loved to lie with her head resting on our feet—mine or Vasya's. This was her favorite position.

In the evening, when everyone came back from work, we got up a regular circus in Vasya's room. We placed chairs against the walls for our friends. The table, as the safest place, was considered the boxes, and the gallery was in front. The program included "Lion Playing Football," "Wrestling, Riding on a Chair" and "Man Puts Head in Lion's Mouth." The last turn was thought to be extremely dangerous. It was Vasya's. He would lie on the floor, while the music stopped, just as it does in the circus, and Kinuli, embracing him cautiously between her paws, would lick his head.

This was the star turn of the program and was always a tremendous success. Vasya would get up, I would turn on the radio, and the spectators would applaud noisily, while Vasya, his head sticky from the licking, would bow and give Kinuli an affectionate pat.

Vasya was very fond of Kinuli and she returned his affection, showing her devotion by all sorts of caresses. But sometimes Vasya turned her out of the room. Then Kinuli would be offended and come to me to complain, lying down and mewing ever so plaintively.

At other times she would complain of me to Vasya, and if we both scolded her, she would go to Perry. So Vasya called her a telltale and sometimes offended her on purpose to make her complain. It was very amusing to watch her.

Kinuli could swear, too. She croaked like a frog, and went straight to her place. Then we had to beg her pardon.

“Kinuli, Pussykins, I won’t do it again,” Vasya would say, and Kinuli, after holding out for a time, and turning away from him, always came round in the end.

There never was such an easygoing, affectionate creature! She would not even eat her meat till she was petted. But her behavior to strangers was now quite different. She sometimes snarled at them, and if they turned their backs on her would even jump at them. This was only her fun, but the neighbors began to be afraid of her. Especially after she knocked Granny down.

This happened quite unexpectedly, even for Kinuli, who did not know her own strength. One day, when the old woman was washing the floor, Kinuli jumped at her, and Granny fell over. Kinuli, as frightened as Granny herself, gave a roar and fled from the room.

But another time it was Kinuli who saved the situation.

It happened on my day off. There was nobody in the flat but a little girl called Galya and myself. Suddenly

there was a ring at the front door and Galya went to open it. A middle-aged man with a sack on his back came in. When we asked him what he wanted he said he had come to exterminate the bugs in our flat. It was no use assuring him that there were no bugs, that the neighbors would come back late, no use telling him to go. The "exterminator" firmly refused to go. I did not know what to do. I could not go away and leave him there alone, and I could not stand there all day either.

It was Kinuli who came to my rescue. She came slinking into the hall, saw a stranger, and stood frozen to the spot, fixing the keen steady eyes of a wild beast on the stranger's face. The man turned his head and suddenly his eyes met the motionless, sinister glance of a wild beast. Kinuli stretched, remained still for a second, showing the gleaming fangs of a half-grown lioness. The "exterminator" started, and made a timid move toward the front door. It was locked.

"Don't be afraid," said Galya, noticing his movement. "It's only a lion."

"A lion! Let me out, can't you?" he yelled.

Without waiting for a reply he snatched the key out of my hand, tore the door open, and rushed downstairs two steps at a time.

We never saw the "exterminator" again.

But after this something else happened.

VII FRIENDLY NEIGHBORS

ONE day I came back early from work. I found the front door unlocked and Kinuli roaming about the passage.

I was astonished. What could it mean? Who could have let her out of the room? We never locked the door, but everyone knew there was a lion in our room and nobody would go in when we were not at home. "Who could have let Kinuli out?" I wondered. I went in, and the first thing I saw was a stranger perched on the top of the sideboard. His face was covered with red blotches, his eyes darted from side to side, and he was shaking all over.

Strangers were always coming to look at our lion, and so I was not surprised to see him. Still, to make sure, I asked him: "How did you get in, Comrade?"

The "comrade," his teeth chattering with fear, replied: "That lion of yours chased me here."

"Very well," I said. "You've been there long enough. Now come down."

But he was not going to do this! He only squeezed nearer and nearer to the wall.

“M-m-militia!” he said. “Call the militia!”

I kept telling him to come down, but he only repeated again and again: “The militia!”

There was nothing for it but to comply with his request and call up the militia station. They soon came. Hardly had the militiamen gotten into the room, when the “comrade” rushed up to them, hiding behind them and begging them to take him away at once.

A few days passed. I had forgotten all about the incident when a notice appeared in *Izvestia*.

It came under the heading of topical events and gave a detailed description of the case of the burglar. I quote the notice in full, without any changes:

Not long ago we reported that V. V. Chaplina, director of the young animals’ department in the Moscow Zoo, was bringing up the lion cub Kinuli in her home.

Kinuli is now a handsome young lioness, about the size of a Great Dane. She opens doors by pulling at the handle with her paw, and when she is hungry she picks up her bowl in her teeth and goes to the kitchen.

A few days ago V. V. Chaplina, returning from work, found Kinuli in a state of great excitement, lying on the threshold of her room and thumping the floor angrily with her tail. Her skin twitched nervously, she was gazing upwards fixedly. Following her glance, Comrade Chaplina saw an unknown man perched on the top of a high cupboard. He was trembling with fear.

Refusing to quit his refuge the stranger told his story without getting off the cupboard. He had broken into the house for purposes of burglary, and had gone undisturbed from room to room in the empty flat till he came to the one in which Kinuli was. The burglar was well into the room before he noticed that he was in the presence of a lioness.

The law-breaker involuntarily backed toward the door, but Kinuli stood in his way, roaring ominously. He climbed onto the table, and she went after him there. The unfortunate burglar jumped onto the top of a high cupboard and remained there for over two hours, zealously guarded by the formidable beast.

The paper containing this notice came out early in the morning, while I was still asleep. I was roused from my slumbers by the telephone. I picked up the receiver. The voice of a friend came to my ears.

“Vera Vasilyevna, are you still alive?”

“Yes, thank you,” I replied. “Why?”

“Why? Haven’t you seen the paper? You haven’t? Oh, you must! It’s written there that a burglar broke into your flat and Kinuli drove him onto the top of a cupboard and almost ate him up. My wife and I were very worried, so I thought I’d ring up to find out how you are.”

I had to tell him the whole story from beginning to end, and hardly had I put down the receiver when there was another ring.

So many people wanted to know what had happened to me that almost as soon as I hung up the receiver the

bell rang again. It never stopped. The harassed and irritated neighbors did not go to it any more, and a few hours later I escaped from the house.

But my troubles were not over in a single day. The newspaper had given not only my name, but my address.

Letters came by the hundred, and we had many new visitors. Masha opened the door to them from morning to night. It wasn't so bad in the daytime, but in the evening we could neither work nor rest; our whole time went in opening and shutting the front door.

Again Kinuli came to the rescue. She had a habit of sniffing at the feet of people coming into the room. Or, still more alarming, she would put her paws round a visitor's ankle and give it a gentle nip. Kinuli's teeth were sharp and terrible, and a stranger could not tell whether she was really going to bite. The poor dears would edge away and very soon take their leave. And gradually fewer and fewer people came to look at the lion.

Although Kinuli was now a grown-up lioness, the neighbors loved her as much as ever. For them she was still the little Kinuli whose mother had abandoned her. Everyone loved her—except little Galya's grandmother. And she did everything in her power to get rid of the lion.

She came to my flat one day, followed by nine or ten persons. Calling me out she took me aside, smiling. It appeared this was a sanitary commission. One of the doc-

tors asked me, "Is it true that you keep a lion in your room, Comrade?"

"It is," I answered. "What about it?"

"You see," he said, "there has been a complaint from some of the tenants that it makes dirt in the flat. So we've come to investigate."

Most of my neighbors were indignant.

"Complaint? Who from? Why, Kinuli's cleaner than a cat!"

I decided not to argue.

"Come in and see her," I said.

I opened the door, and the commission shrank back, hiding behind one another and staring.

Kinuli came to meet me, asking to be petted. Perry came up too. The commission, seeing that there was nothing particularly alarming, drew nearer, and the doctor, forgetting all about the state of the room, gazed at the lioness in admiration. Kinuli began to show off, lying on her back, rubbing against me, taking my hand gently into her mouth, as gently as if she really were a cat. And the room was perfectly clean, not a speck of dust anywhere. There was not even the slightest smell from the lioness. They put it all down in their notebooks.

But this did not discourage the old lady. She handed in another complaint, as if from all the tenants. I did not know what to do about it. Every day a new commission

came. They sent scores of notices demanding the eviction of the lioness. And the old lady went about in triumph.

“The lion won’t live here. I’ll get rid of it.”

But when the other tenants found out that a complaint had been made in their names they were furious.

“We’ll stand up for Kinuli! We’ll go in a body and tell them she isn’t in our way.”

And they wrote a statement to the militia:

“We, the tenants in flat number so-and-so, house number so-and-so, Bolshaya Dmitrovka Street, declare that we have nothing against the lion which lives in our flat. It is perfectly tame and is always kept locked up. It never goes into the passage, kitchen or bathroom, and the room in which it lives is kept clean and tidy. The lion never causes any trouble to us, the tenants of the flat, and is not noisy.”

Everyone in the flat signed this statement, and one woman added a postscript to it:

“I have three children, seven, ten and eleven years old, and I see no danger for them in the lion’s living in the flat. The animal is tame and is under constant care.”

The whole flat rose to the defense of Kinuli.

News of the eviction of the lioness reached the legal authorities. Things took a different turn. One evening the superintendent came to me with the head of the militia station. “Well,” I thought, “she’ll have to go.” I took

them into the room, but my feelings were too much for me, and I could not help bursting out, "Are you going to evict her?"

"Oh, no!" they said. "We only want to find out what it's all about. We have received a statement from Sanitary Inspection that the other tenants complain of your lioness. They write that they're afraid to leave their rooms, and have to take sticks and other objects to defend themselves when they do. So we've come to investigate."

I invited them into my room and told them everything, and showed them the statement drawn up by the neighbors. Just then a neighbor came in to borrow the newspaper.

"Another commission from the old woman?" she said.

The militia officer laughed.

"You tell us," he said, "do you, or do you not, find the lion a nuisance?"

"Not a bit!" she said, flinging out her arms. "As if our Kinuli could be a nuisance!"

Then another one came in.

"We won't let them take our Kinuli away! We didn't bring her up, but we went through a lot while she was growing up."

Then we went in to Kinuli. The great yellow cat got lazily to her feet. She came up to me and rubbed her head affectionately against my knee.

The rest of the neighbors were waiting in the hall for the officer to come out. Everyone was indignant with the old woman, and Tolya's friend Yura, forgetting how Kinuli had once pulled his shorts off him, so that he had had to run back to his room naked, vowed that he would not let them take away Kinuli.

The officer pressed my hand warmly in farewell.

"We are perfectly satisfied, Comrade," he said. "Everything is quite clear now. You won't have any more trouble, and if anyone annoys you, ring me up."

We all stood a long time at the open door, calling after him:

"Thank you, officer! Thank you!"

And the next day I got a letter, saying:

"State District Sanitary Inspection, in consideration of the fact, now elucidated, that the lioness living in your flat is not dangerous, and is at present in delicate health, has rescinded its order for the transfer of the lioness to the Zoological Gardens within three days, and the animal may remain with you till its complete recovery, and till weather conditions are found suitable for its transfer."

Kinuli was allowed to go on living with us, and that was all we wanted.

I was awakened early in the morning by a ring at the door. I leaped out of bed, threw on my dressing-gown,

and hurried to open the door. Who could it be? Why so early?

It was the postman. He smiled amiably and held out a letter to me. On the envelope was written in a careful, childish hand:

KINULI CHAPLIN
BOLSHAYA DMITROVKA STREET
Moscow

At first I could not understand. Neither the number of the house nor of the flat was on the envelope. Very strange! And then I suddenly remembered—it was the 20th of April, Kinuli was a year old, and her young friends were hastening to wish their favorite many happy returns of the day. This put me into the best of spirits. I laughed and the postman laughed. Before turning away he asked me to give Kinuli *his* birthday greetings, too, and kept looking back and nodding to me as he went down the stairs.

When I went into Vasya's room, Kinuli was still asleep. She always woke up early, when Vasya did, but as soon as he left for work she went back to bed. Perry greeted me affectionately, but Kinuli was in no hurry to get up.

"Kinuli!" I cried. "Get up, lazybones! It's your birth-day, you're a year old, and you lie sprawling there!"

Kinuli stretched lazily, and yawned. "Shall I get up,

or not?" her drowsy, half-shut eyes seemed to be saying. But the moment Perry came up to me, Kinuli sprang up. She could not bear anyone else to be petted, and, jealously pushing the dog away, started rubbing against my legs.

There was a lot to be done that day. Things had to be bought to make a birthday dinner for Kinuli from her favorite dishes. And a big soccer ball must be bought. It was Tolya who had the idea of buying Kinuli a ball. He had been saving up to buy one for a long time.

By the evening everything was ready. The table was laid, Masha had fried rissoles, and Kinuli's presents lay on the sofa. Among them were a new bowl, a clockwork car and three huge soccer balls, blown up so big that they looked ready to burst. One was from Tolya, the other two were sent us with birthday greetings by strangers.

The guests soon came.

That day Kinuli had dinner with us. She sat on the sofa eating her soup carefully out of her new bowl. The bowl stood on the table, but Kinuli was such a tidy eater that not a spot was made on the white cloth. When she had finished, she put out her paw and, knocking gently on the table, asked for another helping. But she was not given any more soup, for Masha had made her rissoles and a big omelet as well, in honor of the day. After dinner, Kinuli's birthday letters were read aloud. They were almost all from children, and began like this: "Dear Kinuli,

we love you very much and send you best wishes for your birthday."

At first Kinuli listened attentively, but then she got tired of listening. There were so many letters, and besides there was no more omelet left. She jumped off the sofa and suddenly came to face to face with the soccer balls. They were lovely new tan-colored balls. She had long ago torn up her old one, and now she pounced on them in a single bound, seizing them in her paws and trying to hold them all. The balls rolled away, and Kinuli, a year-old lioness, oblivious to everything else in the world, ran after them like a kitten. It was impossible to watch her without laughing. The balls flew about the room, rolling under chairs, tables and the sofa. The very furniture seemed to have come to life. Everything in the room moved, even the bed rode on Kinuli's back to the other side of the room when the ball rolled under it.

Kinuli got so excited that it was impossible to pacify her. We tried to take away the balls, but Kinuli lay on them, clutching them between her paws and refusing to give them up. It was Masha who found a way out of the difficulty. She called Perry and pretended she was going to take her for a walk. Kinuli abandoned the balls immediately and rushed after the dog. She did not like being left alone.

We always had a great deal of trouble in taking the

dog out without Kinuli. As soon as Perry tried to go out of the room, Kinuli went after her, pushing her away from the door with her paw. We had to think up all sorts of tricks. I would try to distract Kinuli by petting her, while Vasya stood by the door so as to shut it in time and Masha picked up Perry and ran down the passage with her. But the abduction was not always successful. Sometimes Kinuli broke away, rushed after Masha, got Perry away from her, and went back to her room dragging the dog by the scruff of the neck. We called this "the abduction of Perry." Perry was quite used to such treatment, and allowed herself to be dragged back without offering the least resistance.

VIII THE ZOO

THE winter passed almost unnoticed. Spring came, and then summer, and with summer the time for removing Kinuli to the Zoo. This was not because we were tired of her, or found her a nuisance. Quite the contrary. For the older she grew the more obedient and docile she became. She now had a much truer notion of the strength of her paws, the sharpness of her claws—each as long as a finger. She never hurt you if she happened to touch you with her paw while playing, and she never once so much as tore a stocking now. Nor did she spoil things any more. And Masha could leave the dishes on the table, even meat, and Kinuli touched nothing. In a word, she behaved like a well-trained dog.

She had not changed toward Perry either. For the dog, Kinuli was still just a little kitten. Perry followed on Kinuli's heels, licked her muzzle clean after food as before, stood up for her, looked after her. And the lioness

paid her back in the same coin. Never once did she eat up all her meat without leaving a bit for the dog. And so when Kinuli was being fed Perry would lie quietly at a little distance. Sometimes Kinuli would remember us, too. She would bring me or Vasya a nasty, gnawed bone and, thrusting the messy thing right into our faces, invite us to have a bite.

We hated to part with her. But part we must. The militia would not allow us to keep a lioness in our flat any longer—she was a very big animal, and there were a lot of people about. Supposing she were to bite someone, one day!

And so they began to build a house for Kinuli in the Zoo, next to the young animals' territory. When the house was ready, a table and some chairs were put in it, and a small enclosure was railed off for Kinuli to play and romp in.

The day for her departure came. We all got up very early. Kinuli was to go in a car; but nobody knew how she would like this, for she was a big lion now and had not been in one for a long time. It was decided to make all preparations before the arrival of the car. A collar, specially made for the journey, had to be put on her, and the strength of the strap tested. And then something happened which none of us had foreseen. Before I could put the collar on her Kinuli gave a roar, knocked it out of

my hand with her paw, and leaped aside. As it turned out, the collar had been smeared with tar, and the unfamiliar smell alarmed her. We tried all sorts of things. We rubbed the collar with meat and butter, but nothing was any good. Even when we put the collar on Perry, and got the dog to go up to Kinuli, Kinuli would not let her come

Kinuli at eight months with Perry and the author



near her. We had to send hurriedly to the pharmacy for a wide bandage, which we folded in five breadths to make a collar. Kinuli at once allowed us to put this on her.

The car came at ten o'clock. The driver drew up in the yard, and we went out with Kinuli. Poor puss! She was so upset that she did not even notice when we put the collar on her. Three of us held on to the leash—Vasya, Shura and I. Tolya went in front with Perry. If a single one of us stayed behind, Kinuli refused to go on.

In this way we went out of the flat and down the stairs, when suddenly Kinuli took fright and darted back. The strap broke under the strain, and the great yellow lioness rushed home as frightened as a kitten. It did not take her a minute to open the door, and by the time we arrived she was already under the table in her room.

At last we managed with the utmost difficulty to get her out and lure her into the waiting car. Vasya, Shura, little Tolya, Perry and I piled into the car, and tried to persuade Kinuli to get in. She walked round and round for a long time, mewing plaintively, before she could bring herself to do so. But once in, she got straight up on to the seat. She sat with her back paws weighing Vasya down, and her front paws on my lap, and lay quiet the whole way.

In the Zoo a run flooded with sunshine awaited Kinuli, and there were some early visitors, who had heard

that she was coming. When she found herself in a strange place, Kinuli lost her head. She crouched on the ground, hiding her great head under Perry and trembling violently.

I spent that night with her in the cage. All night Kinuli either strode restlessly up and down, trying to get the door open with her paw, or stopped abruptly to listen to the strange sounds of the Zoo at night.

In the morning I went home. Kinuli tried to get out after me, knocking her head again and again against the bars, and suddenly, as if she understood that she would not be able to get out, lay down, huddled up.

Kinuli would not move or eat for a long time. With unseeing eyes she stared into the distance through the bars, past trees, buildings, fences. Her eyes, always so lively and expressive, were now dull, more like the eyes of a dead than a living animal. This look in her eyes, so apathetic and indifferent, alarmed me more than anything else. She did not even seem to recognize *me*. Occasionally, after long pleadings, she would take a bit of meat from my hand. Sometimes she would swallow it, but more often the meat hung from her fangs till it fell, and Kinuli did not even turn her head. She only began to come to herself after about ten days. She could hardly move on her feeble paws, but she began to show an interest in the animals and people around her. Our whole family went

to see her every day. Kinuli rejoiced as never before when Vasya, Shura and Tolya came. She rubbed against their legs fondly, begging to be petted.

Early in the morning, before the Zoo was opened, I used to take her out for a walk. I took her without a collar. Since her arrival at the Zoo, Kinuli had not allowed a collar to be put on her. So I had to take her without a leash. She walked beside me like a great docile dog. And how astonished the other animals were to see her! The deer followed her with terrified glances, ready to stampede. Leaping lightly from rock to rock, a flock of ibexes disappeared round the side of the hill; and the baby elephant, after first rushing at Kinuli, hid behind its house, as if alarmed by its own audacity. Kinuli passed by without paying the slightest attention to any of them. She took no notice of the shouts of the public, either.

There were always spectators in front of Kinuli's cage. They would wait patiently by the hour for the lioness to come out of her house. Many came every day to see how she was getting on.

I shall never forget three little girls who came running up to Kinuli's cage early one morning, as soon as the Zoo was open. The first, panting from her run, asked, "How is Kinuli?"

And when she was told that Kinuli was getting better she turned to her companions, who were just running up,

and shouted joyfully, "Kinuli's getting better!"

The last time they had seen Kinuli she was ill, and they had been so worried that they had dropped in before their exams to see her.

There were people who were worried about me too. If for some reason I was not in Kinuli's enclosure, they would ask the attendant what had happened. They wanted to know if I was not afraid of Kinuli, if she wouldn't kill me. I told them that if she were to do that she would die of grief herself afterwards.

For though Kinuli lived in a cage now, she had not changed toward me in the least. She was as affectionate and tame as ever. Just as before, she would lie down when told to, and let her coat be brushed and combed. I would tug her up by her paws, turn her over on her side, and even pull her tail. Kinuli bore it all—anything to make me stay a little longer in her cage! Sometimes, if she was naughty, I would pretend to go. Then Kinuli would rush after me, catch at me with her paws, and refuse to let me go. Her claws were long and sharp, but she never hurt me with them. She would take bits of meat carefully from between my fingers; and when I left, she looked after me for a long time and at last raised her head and uttered the true lion's roar.

The summer passed, and the cold winter came. Kinuli and Perry were moved to winter quarters. Kinuli

was now a full-grown lioness, and she was put into a cage next to other lions. There were always interested spectators in front of her cage. Everyone was astonished to see such a big lioness living with a dog.

Kinuli and Perry were great friends. When Kinuli was given meat she always left some for Perry. And while the dog ate, the lioness stood over her and would not allow the attendant to clean up till Perry had eaten her fill.

Once Perry fell ill. She was quite an old dog and had had pains in her legs for some time, and now she could not get up. Kinuli was terribly upset. Why didn't Perry get up? Why didn't she eat her meat? Kinuli took her own share to the dog, mewing and trying to lift her with her paw. But Perry did not get up. Then a doctor was called. The doctor wished to examine Perry, and the dog had to be taken out of the cage. But Kinuli refused to part with her friend—whenever anyone came for Perry she would roar and throw herself on the railings like a wild lioness. After great efforts she was lured into another cage, and only then could Perry be taken out.

When Kinuli saw that they had taken Perry away she began banging on the railings, trying to get out of the cage. She ate nothing that day or the next. She grew dull, languid and cross, and would not let anyone come near her. She often roared, terrifying the other inhabitants of the Zoo.

Perry heard her too. She knew Kinuli's roar from all the other lion voices in the Zoo and, pricking up her pointed ears, whined very softly.

Two months passed. Perry had grown well and strong, and could stand quite firmly on her legs again. It was time to put her back with Kinuli.

Kinuli saw Perry coming from a long way off. She cocked her ears and looked long and steadily at her. Oh, how glad they were to be together again! Kinuli rushed up to Perry, mewing, and rubbed her head against Perry so hard that we thought she would crush her. And the dog, quite forgetting her poor legs and her age, romped around the lioness like a puppy.

That day Kinuli and Perry ate well, and slept all night pressed against one another, and Kinuli's melancholy roar was not heard again.

Then came June, 1941. War began.

The Zoo changed beyond recognition. Trenches intersected its smooth walks like deep wrinkles. The boards showing the way to the various animal houses now bore the brief inscription in black letters, "Bomb Shelter." In the town, alerts gave warning of the enemy's approach. The animals listened nervously to the wailing sirens, darting with terrified cries about their cages.

The lions were the most nervous of all, their loud

roars blending with the hum of the first enemy airplanes to get through to Moscow.

On that memorable night of the first air raid none of us went home. We all kept watch beside the animals, and put out the fires which started in several buildings. Fortunately these were not animal houses, or the wild beasts, breaking loose, might have done a great deal of harm. It became imperative to evacuate all the dangerous animals immediately.

Of the lions it was decided to leave only Kinuli, as the tamest and least dangerous, who, even if she got out of her cage, would not have touched anyone.

Despite the hard times, the youngsters of Moscow did not forget Kinuli. They inquired where she went during air raids and advised having her taken to the subway station. The animals were sent to other zoos, some to Stalingrad, some to Sverdlovsk. In the autumn I parted with Kinuli and went to Sverdlovsk, where I continued working in the Zoo. I spent all my spare time in the hospital, caring for the wounded, who soon discovered that I worked in the Zoo.

Some of the patients had even heard of Kinuli. They asked me to tell them about her. The moment I began doing something, I would be asked, "Tell us more about the lioness, nurse." The wounded from other wards came to ask about her. This even led to occasional arguments.

"You have your own nurses, let them tell you stories, leave ours alone!" the wounded in my ward would say.

Even the seriously wounded took an interest in Kinuli, and asked where she was and how she was getting on.

Every letter from Moscow brought me news of Kinuli. They wrote me that Kinuli was quite well and that, though there were very few visitors to the Zoo, there was always somebody standing in front of her cage. Then I heard that Perry was ill, and later that she was dead, and now Kinuli was alone.

Eighteen months later I was in Moscow again, and hastened to the Zoo. There was Kinuli's house. She was lying in a corner of her cage, eating meat. A few visitors were looking on.

I went up to the cage and joined them. A man next to me began telling me about Kinuli—how she had been brought up in a flat, and chased a thief onto the top of a cupboard, and a few other incidents from her life; but I did not listen very attentively.

I was standing quite close to Kinuli, but could not bring myself to call to her. It was not that I feared she would not recognize me. No, it was not that! It was nothing but jealous misgivings: supposing Kinuli won't leave her meat to come to me, supposing she doesn't come up to me at once, doesn't show me affection, as she used to!

So I stood in front of her cage and looked at the big yellow lioness, at the two familiar spots near her nose, and called Kinuli in a whisper. Kinuli heard me at once. She stopped eating, pricked up her ears, and looked at me long and steadily. Then she got up, took a few uncertain steps in my direction, and stopped.

Here I could not restrain myself any longer.

“Kinuli! Kinuli! Pussykins!”

Hardly had I time to get the words out and put my hands through the bars of her cage, when Kinuli rushed up to me, hitting herself so violently against the bars that blood trickled from her nose and mouth. But she took no notice of the pain, and rubbed lovingly against me.

I stayed with Kinuli for over an hour, but as I was leaving, one of the lion-house attendants caught up with me in the office.

“Vera Vasilyevna, go to Kinuli,” he begged. “She’s bruised herself all over, and keeps roaring. I gave her some meat but she won’t touch it; she keeps looking at the door.”

I had to go back. Kinuli really would not eat. She was tearing up and down her cage, stopping every now and again and banging herself against the railings with piteous roars. Visitors had gathered round her cage. They were all trying to comfort her, the man who had told me about Kinuli trying hardest of all.

The moment Kinuli saw me she rushed first to me and then to the meat, picking it up and trying to push it to me through the railings. I was longing to go into the cage and pet her, but could not do so without permission.

I was only allowed to go into Kinuli's cage a few days later, and then on condition that every precaution was taken. Kinuli was driven early in the morning into the outer cage. Prodding irons, rods, lassoes were held in readiness, and a great rubber hose was brought in and connected with the water pipe.

In a word, when I arrived at the time appointed, all preparations had been completed, and Kinuli was still tearing up and down her cage, roaring nervously.

As soon as she caught sight of me she gave a long-drawn affectionate mew, and almost as soon as I opened the door of the cage she rushed up to me.

I had the greatest trouble in keeping on my feet, so violent were Kinuli's demonstrations of affection.

And now nobody doubted any more that Kinuli would never forget me, and I was surer of this than anyone else.

(continued from front flap)

And ever present is the warmth of the author, who loved animals enough to bring a lion cub into her home and was rewarded by a trust and affection that lived as long as Kinuli herself did.

VERA CHAPLINA was born in Moscow. Her career at the Moscow Zoo began when she was fourteen years old. There she became supervisor of the young animals and later chief of one of the zoo's largest departments, the wild animals' section. She worked at the zoo until 1946, writing stories when she could find the time. Since then she has devoted more time to literary pursuits and now is a full-time writer.

The lion cub, Kinuli, was one of many young animals raised by the author, her husband and children in their small Moscow apartment. Kinuli's story glows with Miss Chaplina's love of animals, and her desire to instill something of this feeling in her readers.

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